

Volunteers of America LPGA Texas Classic

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

The Colony, Texas, USA

Old American Golf Club

Lizette Salas

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Here with Lizette Salas at the Volunteers of America Classic.

Lizette, nine holes this morning. It's already hot here on Texas. We had a good taste of that last week. How are you feeling right now after the first nine holes of the pro-am?

LIZETTE SALAS: Honestly, I'm still running on a little bit of adrenaline from last week. After play was done, went down to do some Solheim Cup bonding. That's what I was striving for, to be in a good place to where I felt like I earned that invitation.

Yeah, Monday did that; Tuesday flew up here, took it easy. Still going to take it easy today. Another task at hand with these next four days here in Texas, and it's kind of a little home game for me.

I want to play well and, yeah, only got to play nine, but I don't want to overdo it. My confidence is still high. Just kind of ran over some fundamentals, putting drills. And I think I'll be good to go by tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned the Solheim Cup event. That sounds like a blast. We've had in a couple players who have been there. Stacy was here a little while ago and said you walked in the door with a big smile on your face. What was the day like? We've heard Amy Olson is really good at skeet shooting.

LIZETTE SALAS: She's good at a lot of things. It's pretty unfair. I was enjoying pickleball until she started playing with us. So, I mean, it was fun. You get to hang out with people you don't normally do.

But as I said in the -- when we all gathered together I kind of said, whether you make this team or not, it's an honor to be considered part of this process. It's a big deal. Regardless if you make the team, whatever happens happens, but we're going to be solid no matter with the leadership we have and if our top players keep playing the



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way they do.

And I'm still not on that team yet, so I felt like it was important for me to be there. We have a lot of young players playing well. And I don't know, I don't consider myself a veteran but I guess I am.

But it was nice to get to know people like Cheyenne. I haven't really spent a lot time with her. Jennifer Kupcho. But it was a good time and Pat and the other assistant captains did a great job.

THE MODERATOR: There is another job to do. We're at the next step. What carryover do you take from last week and the great success you had on the course --

LIZETTE SALAS: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: -- to this week?

LIZETTE SALAS: Yeah, I think just my confidence in my ball striking is key. These fairways are a little wider. The greens aren't typically fast, but with the bermudagrass it's a little complicated for me. Coming from California, don't really have bermuda.

And also the wind factor. Once we get to the backside, close to the lake, it can get pretty tricky. So again, this is my game plan: just fairways, greens. I think the confidence that I have with my ball striking and my putting and visualizing my shots and understanding my game, I think that's what's helping me perform better.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned it's kind of a home game. You spent sometime here in Dallas and have a lot of connections here. Does it feel like coming home a little bit?

LIZETTE SALAS: Yeah, definitely does. I spend a lot of my off season and come to create some really good friendships here in the Dallas area.

Now like I get texts, Hey, we're going to come watch you. It's really great to have that home feeling. When we played on the west coast didn't really have that same -- that same

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vibe of having fans out.

And they go big here in Texas. It's going to be a great event. I like the fact that the fans are starting to come out more and you get that full LPGA Tour experience.

So, yeah, I'm pretty excited for the week.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. Last week I know we talked a lot about your discussions about outside the ropes and opening up about personal health and mental health concerns. You've had some time now to think back on the last week and take it in a little bit. Are you still happy that you started talking a little bit about that?

LIZETTE SALAS: Yeah, I think honestly, I didn't plan on talking about it. I didn't -- I was going to just stay on course, do what I got to do on the golf course, but it just came out and I felt confident enough to talk about it. I wanted to back in January, but it wasn't genuine, authentic, it wasn't me.

So I think with everything coming together on the golf course I was able to be my true self off the course, and I think with my whole team being so supportive it just allowed me to let go and to move forward.

And I don't know if you -- I saw some of the highlights and I was like, I wow'd myself. You know, I'm like, That's the girl I remember. And of course like my whole family, my team, they were like, that's who you are. You're a grind, you're a fighter. I'm extremely proud.

I think it just shows how far I've come. That word "retirement" should never have come out of my mouth, and I'm extremely grateful for everyone supporting me, who kept knocking at door, asking me, talk to me, are you okay.

I didn't want to at the time, but I finally just allowed myself to trust people and to know that -- just to reevaluate my self-worth and self-value.

I think as pro golfers we base it on our performance, and now I get to reevaluate that outside of the course and say, I'm a good person and I think everything that's going on, I worked hard for it and I should enjoy it.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. As someone who has had similar issues it's great to see someone who can talk about it, and I think it says a lot about our tour that we can be there for each other in times like this.

LIZETTE SALAS: Yeah, definitely. I'm blessed to have coworkers that care, acquaintances who are pulling for me. On Sunday night I was getting text messages from people

I didn't expect. That's what this tour is about.

Yeah, we're competing against each other every single week, but we understand the ups and downs of what this game can do and how impactful it is to share what it is we're going through.

So we also -- I mean, it's part of -- we talk about act like a Founder. So we want this tour to be better for the next generations come. I feel like being vulnerable and being in that uncomfortable phase, that's also being part of it.

Not being scared to talk. And me, I'm not a talker. I just keep everything in. But to some extent it has to come out. That's exactly what happened last week. I am just so fortunate and grateful for all the positivity that was coming my way. It was a little bit overwhelming, I'm not going to lie, but it was beautiful, magical week, and I'm just really, really blessed.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. You got a big smile on your face. We like that. Beth Ann?

Q. I just wanted to ask, the Solheim Cup, you talk a lot about how it fires you up. Is it the most important thing to you in your career? And if so, why?

LIZETTE SALAS: Yeah, I would say that the biggest moments of your career come from the Solheim Cup. Yeah, my victory at Kingsmill in '14, that was a great moment. But to be part of something bigger, to work for something for two years. And, I mean, personally, this is from someone -- this is from a daughter of immigrants. This is what my family strived for, like that American dream.

So when I get to be on that stage and you see that American flag, that's all I think about, is what my family has gone through and just all the hard work and sacrifice. And the fact that we play against Team Europe and we just want to keep that Cup or bring the Cup back, that competitiveness.

The biggest stage in women's golf. I can go on and on and on. Like the colors that we wear. I mean, it's just the biggest treat for me personally. I think the world doesn't understand yet the magnitude of a Solheim Cup. We saw it in 2019 of going tied 8-8 at Gleneagles and what it came down to, and just the fight that we go through for not only two years to get on the team, but for the entire week.

Yeah, I think I'm just going to stop there. And the leadership, too. I was fortunate enough to have captains like Meg Mallon and Juli Inkster and hopefully now Pat Hurst.

It's something to be -- great to be a part of, and as an American, I'm just honored that I've had the privilege to be on four teams and hopefully five.

Q. And one other thing. From the practice session, how critical do you think that time is for the actual event?

LIZETTE SALAS: You mean like the --

Q. What you just did at Oconee.

LIZETTE SALAS: I think it's really important. I think especially when the team dynamic starts shifting. As I used to be one of the newbies, now I'm sort of the veteran. And now we're not seeing -- it's just the rotation is now starting -- now it's been almost ten years.

So I think it's important not only to show your face, to show that you're capable of being a team player, but to also get out of that uncomfortableness and be around your potential teammate. Because at the end of the day, that's who you're playing for. That's who you're grinding and fighting with for three days or for however many matches you're playing.

The more we get comfortable around each other the more we understand in how we function. I think at the end of the day it's going to help us bring that Cup back. I even said during one of the dinners, The process starts now. It doesn't start Monday. It starts with opening up, understanding who you are and how you function on the golf course, and how your teammate can understand that and kind of run with it in a positive way. That way we can win matches, points, and ultimately win the Cup.

THE MODERATOR: Last question from me. Take it strictly inside the golf course. How are you feeling right now, other than tired?

LIZETTE SALAS: I feel good, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: When it comes time to tee it up on Thursday in competition, how do you think you fare out there this week?

LIZETTE SALAS: Yeah, I feel good. I feel like I could take what I did from last week into this week. Honestly it's a different ballgame, different golf course, but my game plan doesn't change. I think understanding my strengths and my weaknesses and applying that to this golf course, I think we can play well this week.

And I think also conserving my energy as well. After -- I

typically don't play after a major, but considering this is a home game and it's Texas, 4th of July, I was excited to play and excited to have Volunteers of America continue the support and to have the fans out.

And I need some more points, too. Need some more Solheim Cup points. So I think this will be a good week, and I just have to stick to my game plan.

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